

December 20, 2007

STENEHJEM FINES UNLICENSED FARGO ROOFING CONTRACTORS Assesses \$30,500 in Nine Enforcement Actions

BISMARCK – Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem today announced the settlement of nine investigations and resulting enforcement actions stemming from contractor compliance inspections in Fargo during November.

Following the September hailstorm in Fargo, the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division organized an inter-agency contractor compliance task force to conduct random licensing inspections on contractors in Fargo. The inspections included the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division, Job Service North Dakota, and Workforce Safety & Insurance and initially occurred on November 7 and 8. During those inspections the team discovered unlicensed contractors or subcontractors conducting roofing repairs on 6 homes. Roofing work at four of the locations resulted in the detention of 31 illegal aliens by the United States Border Patrol.

On November 20 the Consumer Protection Division and Job Service North Dakota conducted an additional 10 random inspections in Fargo resulting in violations by 3 more contractors. "We were pleased at that time to visit with the many contractors that were licensed and in compliance with North Dakota law," Stenehjem said.

Stenehjem has reached settlements with the nine contractors alleged to have violated licensing requirements. The majority of violations involved a failure of the subcontractors to be licensed. These companies have agreed to ensure future compliance with licensing laws and pay total fines of \$30,500.

Stenehjem noted these companies all cooperated with the investigations and enforcements actions. "These entities have already taken action to ensure future compliance with state laws," said Stenehjem.

"I want to acknowledge and thank the majority of contractors who are in compliance with our licensing laws," Stenehjem said. "It is very important that contractors have the necessary licenses, insurance policies for protection of the homeowners, and protection for injured workers to ensure that the laws are strictly followed, and that homeowners are not subjected to unexpected liabilities."

Stenehjem's office received complaints from licensed contractors about unlicensed contractors. "We want to ensure a level playing field for all businesses that comply with our laws," Stenehjem said. Stenehjem anticipates conducting future compliance inspections.

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